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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

CONFIDENTIAL

EXCISE

A22986

1967 APR 23 AM 7 10

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 10/6/81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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DE RUMJIR 23748 1131105
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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC
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BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 23748

LIMDIS

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF APRIL 21, SAID THAT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TRAN VAN HUONG IS IN TOUCH WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH GENERAL THIEU AND GENERAL KY. CLAIMS THAT KY HAS OFFERED HUONG THE SECOND SPOT ON HIS TICKET WHILE THIEU HAS OFFERED TO RUN AS HUONG'S VICE PRESIDENT. SAID THAT KY'S OFFER IS UNACCEPTABLE, BUT THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THIEU CONTINUE.

2. IMMEDITELY AFTER HIS COMMENTS HUONG'S CONTACTS WITH THIEU'S REPRESENTATIVES HOWEVER, SAID THAT HE HAS ASKED SOUTHER BUDDHIST LAY LEADER MAI THO THRUYEN TO RUN AS HUONG'S VICE PRESIDENT. TRUEYN AT FIRST REFUSED THE OFFER BUT HAS AGREED TO RECONSIDER. HE WILL GIVE HIS ANSWER

PAGE TWO RUMJIR 23748 C O N F I D E N T I A L
IN A WEEK OR SO.

3. ALTHOUGH ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED FOR A MIXED MILITARY CIVILIAN TICKET, HE HINTED BROADLY THAT IF THE HUONG-TRUYEN TICKET WER ELECTED, HE WOULD BE NAMED AS PRIME MINSTER. HE SAID THAT HUONG WILL NOT ANNOUNCE HIS CHOICE FOR PRIME MINISTER BEFORE THE ELECTION, PRIMARILY BECAUSE THREE SOUTHERNERS ON ONE TICKET WOULD LOOK UNBALANCED.

4. ASKED WHEN HUONG WILL COME TO SAIGON, ANSWERED BY SAYING HE IS BARGAINING FOR A SUITABLE HOUSE FOR HUONG. HE ALSO SAID AT ONE POINT IN THE CONVERSATION THAT HUONG WILL NOT RUN IF THE ELECTORAL LAW IS NOT TO HIS LIKING.

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5. COMMENT: A. REPRESENTATIVES OF KY AND THIEU POSSIBLY ARE IN TOUCH WITH HUONG. THEY MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE MADE THE OFFERS THAT CLAIMS, AND IF THE OFFERS WERE MADE, THEY MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED AND SERIOUS. WE DOBUT THAT THEIU IS SERIOUSLY NEGOTIATING FOR SECOND SPONT ON HONG'S TICKET PARTICULARLY SINCE BY HOS OWN ACCOUNT IS AT SAME TIME TRYING TO GET MAI THO TRUYEN TO RUN WITH HUONG.

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PAGE THREE RUMJIR 23748 C O N F I D E N T I A L

B. MAI THO TRUYEN LIKE HUONG IS WIDELY RESPECTED FOR HIS INTERGRITY. ALSO LIKE HUONG, HE IS SOMETHING OF AN OLD SOUTHERN MANDARIN. HIS SOUTHERN BUDDHIST STUDIES ASSOCIATION HAS FEW ACTIVE MEMBERS, VIRTUALLY ALL OF THEM SOUTHERNERS, AND IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT TRUYEN WOULD INCREASE MATERIALLY THE TICKET'S VOTER APPEAL.

C. HUONG IS APPARENTLY IN NO HURRY TO LEAVE HIS REFUGE INVUNG TAU. ALTHOUGH HE HAS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED HIS PROVISIONAL CANDIDACY, WE DO NOT CONSIDER IT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT HE WILL RUN.

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